



N. D. WILSON

100 CUPBOARDS

➤ BOOK 1 ◀

CHAPTER SAMPLER

100 CUPBOARDS

➤ BOOK I ◀



N. D. WILSON

A YEARLING BOOK

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cousin Henrietta discover and explore hidden doors in his attic room that seem to
open onto other worlds.

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CHAPTER ONE



Henry, Kansas, is a hot town. And a cold town. It is a town so still there are times when you can hear a fly trying to get through the window of the locked-up antique store on Main Street. Nobody remembers who owns the antique store, but if you press your face against the glass, like the fly, you'll see that whoever they are, they don't have much beyond a wide variety of wagon wheels. Yes, Henry is a still town. But there have been tornadoes on Main Street. If the wind blows, it's like it won't ever stop. Once it's stopped, there seems to be no hope of getting it started again.

There is a bus station in Henry, but it isn't on Main Street. It's one block north—the town fathers hadn't wanted all the additional traffic. The station lost one-third of its roof to a tornado fifteen years ago. In the same summer, a bottle rocket brought the gift of fire to its restrooms. The damage has never been repaired, but the town council makes sure that the building is painted fresh every other year, and always the color of

a swimming pool. There is never graffiti. Vandals would have to drive more than twenty miles to buy the spray paint.

Every once in a long while, a bus creeps into town and eases to a stop beside the mostly roofed, bright aqua station with the charred bathrooms. Henry is always glad to see a bus. Such treats are rare.

On this day, the day our story begins, bus hopes were high. The Willis family was expecting their nephew, and the mister and missus stood on the curb waiting for his arrival.

Mrs. Willis couldn't hold nearly as still as the town. She was brimful of nervous energy and busily stepped on and off the curb as if she were waiting for the bus to take her off to another lifetime of grammar school and jump rope. She had planned to wear her best dress on principle—it was the sort of thing her mother would have done—but she had no idea which of her dresses was best, or how to begin the selection process. It was even possible that she didn't have a dress that was best.

So she had remained in her sweatpants and T-shirt. She had been canning in her kitchen and looked pleasant despite the faded teal of her pants. Her face was steam-ruddied and happy, and her brown hair, which had originally been pulled back into a ponytail, had struggled free. On this day, if you got close enough, as

her nephew would when hugged, she smelled very strongly of peaches. She was of medium build in every direction, and she was called Dotty by her friends, Dots by her husband, and Mrs. Willis by everyone else.

People liked Dotty. They said she was interesting. They rarely did the same for her husband. They said Mr. Willis was thin, and they didn't just mean physically. They meant thin everywhere and every way. Dotty saw much more than thin, and she liked him. Frank Willis didn't seem to notice much of anything beyond that.

Mrs. Willis stopped her stepping and backed away from the curb. Something was shimmering on the highway. The bus was coming. She nudged Frank and pointed. He didn't seem to notice.

The Henry on the bus was not a town in Kansas. He was simply a twelve-year-old boy on a slow bus from Boston, waiting to meet an aunt and uncle he had not seen since the age of four. He was not looking forward to reuniting with Aunt Dotty and Uncle Frank. Not because he in any way disliked them, but because he had led a life that had taught him not to look forward to anything.

The bus stopped amid a shower of metallic grunts. Henry walked to the front, said goodbye to a talkative old woman, and stepped onto the curb into a lung-taste of diesel. The bus lurched off, the taste faded, and

he found that he was being held tight by someone rather soft, though not large, and the smell of diesel had been replaced by peaches. His aunt held him back by the shoulders, her smile faded, and she became suddenly serious.

“We are both so sorry about your parents,” she said. She was diligently eye-wrestling him. Henry couldn’t quite look away. “But we are very happy you’re going to be staying with us. Your cousins are all excited.”

Someone patted Henry on the shoulder. He looked up.

“Yep,” Uncle Frank said. He was watching the bus march out the other end of town. “The truck’s over here,” he added, and gestured with his head.

Uncle Frank carried Henry’s duffel bag while Aunt Dotty escorted him to the truck, one arm tightly wrapped around his shoulder. It was an old truck. A few decades earlier, it may have been a Ford. Then it had been donated as a shop-class project to Henry High. Uncle Frank bought it at an end-of-the-year fundraiser. The paint was scum brown, the sort that normally hides at the bottom of a pond, attractive only to leeches and easily pleased frogs. The class had not been able to afford the bigger wheels they had dreamed of, so they had simply lifted the truck body as high as the instructor would allow. The overall effect was one

of startling ricketiness. Henry's bag was thrown into the truck bed.

"Hop in," Uncle Frank said, and pointed in the back. "The tailgate doesn't drop, so just stand on the tire there and hoick yourself over. I'll boost you a bit."

Henry stood on the tire and teetered for a moment, trying to get one leg over the edge of the truck bed. Uncle Frank pushed him from behind, and he tumbled in onto his side.

Henry had never ridden in the back of a truck before, and he had always assumed it was illegal, though on the one trip his parents had taken him on, a tour of early Southwestern settlements, he had seen an entire truckload of field workers drive by. As he had been strapped into a car seat in the back of a Volvo at the time, he was extremely jealous. Only a few miles later, he had learned to his surprise that nine-year-old boys do not usually ride in car seats. A laughing school bus full of children taught him the lesson at a stoplight.

Henry perched himself on one of the truck's wheel wells and prepared for a spiritual experience. The engine fired its way into life, Frank forced reluctant metal gears together, and Henry slid off the wheel well into the truck bed as Henry, Kansas, swirled through his hair. They drove one block before the truck shifted its weight in the saddle and muscled around a right turn.

Henry slipped onto his back and spread-eagled so he wouldn't roll. Two blocks later, the truck bounced hard, and gravel rattled in the wheel wells like gunshots. Henry watched a rooster tail of dust climb into the sky behind the truck, and he tried to keep from banging his head every time the truck hopped a pothole. Eventually Uncle Frank stopped with a strong pull on the emergency brake, and Henry slid headfirst into the back of the cab. He picked himself carefully up onto all fours and peered at a pale blue house that he vaguely remembered. Aunt Dotty was grinning at him in the side mirror, pointing at the house and waving.

The house seemed big, and an even bigger barn hulked behind it. A mostly white cat sprawled in the yard, looking revolted by something or other. Old leaded-glass windows lined the first floor, a row of small windows the second, and one big, round window perched up in the eaves. On the front porch, below a long row of green-tarnished wind chimes, three girls stood staring at him.

Henry sat on the wood floor with his back to a wall. The three girls sat facing him, all cross-legged. They were in the attic. The whole room was open. The walls coved, and an old rail guarded the top of some very steep stairs. Henry was looking to his left, out the big, round window at the far end, trying to avoid staring at

his cousins as much as they were staring at him. To Henry's right, at the other end of the attic, a pair of small doors led into a space that was no longer the attic closet and was now Henry's bedroom. Uncle Frank had apologized for the size and pointed out, before Aunt Dotty threw an elbow to his ribs, that if Henry's parents were never heard from again and Henry had to live with them always, they would go ahead and knock the wall down and expand his room a bit.

Henry had thanked him.

"I'm Anastasia," the smallest girl said.

"I know," said Henry. She was the youngest, small and wiry for a nine-year-old. And freckled. Her hair was brown, but Henry thought it looked like it wanted to be red.

"Then how come you didn't say 'Hello, Anastasia' right off? Were you just being rude?"

"Hush," the oldest girl said.

Anastasia wrinkled her lip. "If you knew I was Anastasia, then what are their names?"

Henry looked to the oldest girl. Her straight, nearly black hair hung loose past her shoulders. She smiled at him.

"Penny," Henry said. He turned to the third girl, who had thick brown curls and green eyes. "And Henrietta."

Henrietta was staring at him. Henry looked away. He suspected he had done something rather awful to Henrietta's cat on his last visit. Suddenly the memory appeared vividly in the foreground of his mind and danced an emphatic jig. He turned red and Anastasia started talking again.

"What's Penny *stand* for?" she asked, narrowing her eyes.

Penny smiled and pulled her crossed legs tighter. "It doesn't stand for anything, Anastasia."

"It stands for Penelope," Anastasia insisted. "Doesn't it, Henry?" Henry shrugged, but Anastasia wasn't looking at him. She was looking at Henrietta.

Henrietta ignored her.

"No," Penny said. "It's *short* for Penelope, it doesn't *stand* for it. Standing for something is when you just do initials."

Henry tried to catch Henrietta's eye. "Do they call you Henry?" he asked.

"Yes," Henrietta said. Henry watched her jaw clench. "I don't like it," she added.

"Henrietta's too long," Anastasia said.

Henry thought for a moment. "It's no longer than Anastasia." He double-checked the syllables in his head. "Yeah."

"For a while I wanted to be called Josephine, but

then they just called me Jo.” Henrietta looked at Henry.
 “Will you call me Beatrice?”

“Um, sure,” Henry said.

“We’ll call you Beat,” Anastasia said, smiling.

“No, you won’t,” Henrietta said. “Not if you want to keep your teeth.”

“Stop it,” Penny said. “Why don’t we just call you Henrietta? Now that *he’s* here, we can’t call you Henry.”

Henrietta considered this option. She looked at Henry. She seemed to want him to agree.

“Okay,” Henry said. They were silent again, and Henry’s thoughts wandered back through his tour of the house.

The revolted cat—one of the girls had called him Blake—had quickly disappeared while Aunt Dotty led Henry onto the porch and very helpfully said, “Henry, you remember the girls.”

Henry had then been attached to a human train, one back from the engine, on a high-speed tour of the house. He had seen sofas, gifts from dead great-aunts, lamps that didn’t work, treasures acquired by Uncle Frank on the Internet (including a fish fossil now being used, uniquely and quite cheaply, Dotty pointed out, as an end table). Fingers pointed down the stairs into a dark basement. Various artistic pieces were highlighted, all produced by Frank and the girls. Aunt

Dotty had laughed and called them “especially local artists.” Henry was shown the junk drawer, containing a small flashlight, a box of rubber bands, and a sedimentary layer of pens, pencils, paper clips, glue, and a plastic box with a picture of the ocean on its lid. He had seen the toilet, been shown the plunger, and heard of the plumbing trouble. He had been told to hold still and listen to see if the fridge would make its funny noise. It hadn’t, but he had been warned that he would know when it did. And on the big second-story landing, there had been the door to the room at the front of the house. Henrietta had called it Grandfather’s room, but no one had gone near it. Every other door in the house, every cabinet, every drawer, and every cupboard, had all been opened. But not that one.

Henry’s mind snapped back. He was still on the floor in the attic. The girls had not yet grown weary of him and departed.

“Henry?” Anastasia said. “Henry, do you think your parents are going to die?”

Penny shot an eye-rebuke in her sister’s direction, but it went unheeded. Henrietta and Anastasia were staring at Henry. Henrietta began twisting her hair.

Anastasia leaned forward. “Zeke Johnson’s dad got killed by a combine.”

“Stop it!” Penelope said. “If you don’t want to talk about it, Henry . . .”

“Penelope likes Zeke,” Anastasia said. Henrietta laughed.

Penelope darkened. “Everyone likes Zeke,” she said.

Anastasia looked right into Henry’s eyes. “He goes up to the graveyard by himself,” she said. “And he pitches baseballs at his dad’s gravestone.”

Penelope crossed her arms. “Mr. Simon told him to write his dad a goodbye letter and he didn’t want to. So he pitched to him instead.”

“I don’t want to talk about Zeke,” Henrietta said. “Penny always talks about Zeke. I want to hear about Uncle Phil and Aunt Ursula.”

“Do you think they’re going to die?” Anastasia asked again.

Penelope sniffed. “You don’t have to, Henry.”

Henry pulled in a deep breath and then sighed. “No, it’s okay. I don’t know much, anyway. They got taken hostage riding their bicycles in Colombia. The men who talked to me at school said they would be ransomed back.”

“What were they doing?” Henrietta asked.

“They’re travel writers, and they wanted to write a book about bicycling across South America. They’ve been doing stuff like that ever since I was old enough to go to school.”

“You’ve been to a lot of places, then,” Henrietta said.

“No,” Henry said. “They never take me with them. I’ve been to Disney World, but that was with a nanny. And California once.”

Anastasia leaned forward. “Your parents really got kidnapped?” she asked. Henry nodded. “By guys with guns? Do you think they had masks? Your parents might be tied up in a cave somewhere right now.”

“I don’t know. Something like that,” Henry said. “They got kidnapped, anyway.”

The three girls were impressed, and they sat, chewing on lips or nails, examining Henry and quietly contemplating the situation.

After a moment, Frank’s voice climbed loudly up the stairs. “Scrub the bones!” he yelled, and the attic echoed.

“What?” Henry asked.

The girls picked themselves up off the floor.

“Teeth,” Henrietta said. “Brush your teeth.”

CHAPTER TWO



Henry was having trouble falling asleep. Aunt Dotty had made up his bed while he was brushing his teeth, and Uncle Frank had shoved a swamp cooler from the basement into the round window at the end of the attic. Henry had never seen a swamp cooler before, but he assumed it was pretty much the same as the air conditioners that stuck out of the wall under hotel windows. Only this one was leaning a little dangerously to one side and was packed in place with old overalls.

Henry's room contained his bed, on which he sprawled, a little stand that looked like it was meant to hold a fake fern but now held a reading lamp, and a three-drawer dresser. His doors were open. Henry wanted the full benefit of the swamp cooler.

Henry's light was off. There was no reason to have it on. The only thing to look at in his little room was a poster on the ceiling, and he'd finished staring at it a long time ago. Uncle Frank said that it had been his when he was young. It was a picture of the University

of Kansas basketball team. One of them, at least. And not a very good one, Henry thought. None of the guys looked athletic.

Because of the moon, the attic was almost brighter without Henry's lamp. It hung low in the sky and its light climbed in the window, sloshing silently around the floor and silvering the walls. Henry watched the silver light until his eyes began to water. He wasn't blinking. He was too awake to blink. He wondered if there was any chance that this summer he would get to play baseball. He would have to learn to throw first. And he'd have to make sure that no one saw him learning.

Henry hoped his parents would be all right. He even hoped they would come back. But he also thought it would be nice if they came back at the end of the summer, right before he went back to school, or whenever the baseball season ended.

Henry was thinking about baseball and his uncle's truck, as well as what exactly it was his aunt had smelled like when she hugged him, when something thumped against the wall above his head. He landed gently on his bed before he even realized that he'd jumped in surprise. He forced himself to breathe, still not blinking.

"Some bird," he said loudly. He was not going to whisper. "Probably an owl or a bat or something."

Henry tried to force his eyes shut, not noticing when they popped back open. Whatever had thumped outside of his wall was now scratching. Or he was imagining that it was. He couldn't be sure. Yes, he could. It thumped again, not as loudly, but still a genuine thump.

Henry sat up in bed and tried to breathe normally, picturing large bats scrambling on the house and rats trekking through the walls. No different from thousands of noises in thousands of nights, he told himself. Roll over. Ignore it. Instead, he got out of bed and walked to the stairs. He would go to the bathroom. He would run water and flush a toilet. He would wash his mind with normal noise.

Leaving behind the moonlit attic was like stepping into a hole, and the steep stairs squealed at him as he went.

Someone had left the light on in the bathroom—a band of glow at the bottom of the door frosted the carpeted landing. When he reached the door, Henry put his hand out for the knob and froze. Someone was probably inside. No one would leave the light on and then shut the door.

Henry hated knocking. He hated conversations through bathroom doors. So he dropped his hand and turned to go sit on the stairs and wait. He hadn't taken

a step when the knob turned. Henry caught his breath, jumped toward the stairs, and sat down in the darkness.

An old man stepped onto the landing. He was short and had a polished bald head with white hair straggling off the sides. Long tweed trousers were rolled up at his ankles, and a purple satin bathrobe hung down around a dirty white T-shirt. The bottom of the bathrobe piled on the floor around the man's bare feet.

The man was daubing shaving cream off his neck with a hand towel. He sniffed loudly and brought the towel up to his face while he turned toward Grandfather's bedroom door at the end of the landing. The purple robe dragged behind him like the train on a wedding dress. Before he touched the door, he looked back over his shoulder. His deep black eyes settled on Henry in the darkness.

Henry blinked hard and then yawned, stretching his arms above his head. Someone had left the bathroom light on, but the door was open. Why was he sitting on the stairs? He wasn't sure, but he needed to use the bathroom.

He did, and then hurried back up the stairs into his attic.

Henry slid into his bed with his mind wandering aimlessly, looking for something it had lost. He knew

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he had forgotten something, but he didn't notice when one blink was too heavy to reopen. He was somewhere else, dreaming of a field where he knew how to throw a ball. And for some reason, a man in a purple robe was watching.

CHAPTER THREE



Henry slept for a long time. He woke because he couldn't sleep any longer. His body was full. He picked himself up out of bed, pulled on his jeans and a T-shirt, and felt his way down the steep stairs with feet a little soft from sleep. He found his aunt in the kitchen.

"Henry!" she said, and grinned at him. She was still canning. Her hair was staggering away from her temples, and her face was tomato red above a faded green apron. An enormous black pot boiled on the stove. "We were about to send out a search-and-rescue team." She laughed and cranked a contraption that was pulping wrinkly apples. Henry stared at the long snake of peels and cores and nastiness that was crawling out of one end. Dotty looked back at him and laughed again. "Don't you look down on my apples, Henry York! The worms add to the flavor. Cold cereal's on the shelf behind you if you like, and I'd think you would after coming out of hibernation. Bowl's on the counter. Milk's in the fridge."

“Thanks,” Henry said, and began assembling his breakfast. He was used to milk with transparent edges, milk that looked a little blue. This milk looked more like cream. It was thick, white, and coated the cereal with film as Henry poured. In his mouth, he could feel it clinging to his tongue. His tongue didn’t mind.

Dotty dumped a bowl of pulped cores into the trash and turned around.

“Well, then, Henry York,” she said. “When you’re finished there, you can rinse out your bowl. Then, unless you want to go back to bed and sleep through another meal, you can head out to the barn. Your uncle wants to talk with you. You should have it to yourselves. The girls are off in town for a birthday.” She wiped her hands on her apron and turned back to her work.

Henry, licking his teeth, walked out of the kitchen, through mounds of boots in the mudroom, and onto the back porch. The overgrown lawn drifted downhill to the foot of the barn. Beyond the barn, flat fields stretched to the horizon, broken only by irrigation ditches and the occasional dirt road. The rest was all sky.

Henry stood and stared blankly at the landscape. At another time, it would have affected him. He would have marveled at the flatness, at the bareness, at how much space could fit into a single view. Instead, he

wandered through his sleep-cobwebbed mind, trying to sort and straighten thoughts just as filmy as his teeth and tongue.

Distracted, Henry walked down to the barn. The door was a puzzle. It was a slider, and he couldn't get the metal lever to unlatch. When he did finally succeed in jerking it up, he couldn't persuade the big plank door to plow along its rusty runners. With a slip and a stagger, he got it in the end and walked inside, too curious about the contents of the barn to notice his rust-stained hands. It was bigger inside than he had expected. There were old plank stalls along both sides. A Weed Eater and three bicycles dangled from the beams.

"Henry? That you down there?" Uncle Frank's voice fell through the ceiling above him. "Come on up. There's a ladder at the end."

Henry found the ladder, nailed to the wall and completely vertical. He stepped onto the lowest rung, a dry, dirty board, and stared up the ladder shaft—up past two levels, up to the underside of the barn's beamed ceiling. There had been a ladder on Henry's bunk bed, and that was as high as he'd ever climbed.

"Henry?" his uncle yelled.

"Yeah, I'm coming, Uncle Frank."

"All the way up. I'm in the loft."

Henry started climbing. If he fell, there would be an enormous dust cloud where he landed. Would Uncle Frank even hear him? How long would he lie there? What would he look like to Frank, from up in the loft? He shivered.

As he climbed through the second level, he glanced around. Large pink chalk clouds decorated the floor beside a hopscotch grid. He quickly scrambled up the last couple of rungs and stuck his head through the floor into the loft.

"Heya, Henry," Uncle Frank said. He was sitting at a desk buried in stuff. "You like the climb?"

"Sure," Henry said, breathing hard. He came the rest of the way up and stepped off the ladder.

Frank smiled. "It goes higher. Up all the way to the roost. Climb on up if you like. There's a little door you can throw open, and a shelf that's pretty much pigeon world. You have to be careful. It gets slick if they've been there recently. It's probably the highest elevation in Kansas, not counting other barns and the silos. There's some big ones around here."

"Silos?" Henry asked, looking toward the roost. "Like where they store grain?"

"That's what I mean," Frank said. "Now, Henry, I want to tell you something. Your aunt doesn't know about it, and I might not even tell her for a good while.

But I need to spill beans to somebody, and here you are.”

“What is it?” Henry pulled his eyes down from the roost and looked at his uncle. Frank had a computer on an old buffet, a hutch full of doors and drawers. The monitor sat in the middle, surrounded by mounds of knickknacks—jumbled figurines, small vases, and tools. Henry could see a hatchet handle and a miniature Canadian flag in one pile, half a model ship in another.

Frank leaned back in his chair and curled his lips against his teeth. “I got a store on the Internet, and I sell things to people all over the world. Been doing it for almost two months now, and today I’ve struck it rich!” Frank laughed. “I’ve just sold two tumbleweeds for fifteen hundred dollars.”

“Who’d buy tumbleweed?” Henry asked. “That’s a lot of money.”

Frank grinned and put his hands behind his head. “Yes, it is. I would have been happy with ten dollars for the both of them, but some Japanese businessmen got their blood up for the weeds, fought it out with each other, and here I sit, a wealthy man. That’s seven hundred and fifty dollars a pop.”

“Wow,” Henry said. “Do you really think they’ll pay?”

“Sure they will.” He straightened and slid forward

in his chair. "Are you busy with something? How about we ride into town for some ice cream and then go pickin' money? Run in and tell your aunt we're going. I'll be in just after I e-mail my new client."

Henry didn't ride in the back of the truck this time. He bounced and jostled between the door and the long prong of the stick shift. He was not buckled. He had waited to be told, but now he suspected that wouldn't happen.

Henry cranked his window down, put his arm out, and leaned his face into the wind. They were going all the way to the other side of town, his uncle had said, and so they had taken the farm roads around rather than driving straight through. Henry's father had given him a book on city planning for Christmas, so he couldn't help thinking of the road as a sort of beltway, a ring road. Only it's gravel, Henry thought. And barely two lanes.

He stopped thinking about cities and watched the town of Henry slide past to his right. He was thrown against his door and bounced up to the roof as the truck failed to leap a pothole. The window handle dug into his leg, and he hit his head on something. Still, he didn't buckle. He did, however, sneak his hand up when he thought his uncle wasn't looking and lock his door.

Locusts were flying up in front of the truck and spinning off in its wake when Frank turned right to connect to the main road and reenter the town from the other side.

“Is that really faster?” Henry asked.

“Nope,” Frank said. “Just more fun. No point in taking a truck like this down Main Street except when we’re heading to the barbershop or closer.”

The two of them began with ice cream at a gas station. Then they pressed their faces on the window of the closed antique shop, squinting at stacks of wheels in the dusty darkness. The ice cream made Frank hungry, so he took Henry to a place called Lenny’s, owned by a man named Kyle, and they ate flat cheeseburgers and thick fries. In a town smaller than Henry had first imagined, they managed to dawdle away the afternoon, going from place to place for one reason or another or no reason at all. Until finally they arrived at the city park and a rummage sale run by senior citizens beneath a sagging pavilion.

As Henry climbed out of the truck, an old woman in a red vest told him to make sure to spend his money, because all of it would go toward the Fourth of July fireworks at the football field.

Henry didn’t have any money, and he wasn’t all

that interested in the rummage sale. He sat down with his back to a pole.

"Hey, Henry!" Frank yelled across three rows of tables. "You got a glove?"

"A glove?" Henry blinked. "What do you mean?"

"Baseball glove," Frank said. "You got one? 'Ope, never mind, it's a lefty."

Henry sat up. "I'm left-handed," he said. "But I don't think I want it. I don't really like baseball." Which is what many people say when they mean "I'm not any good."

"Well, get on over here and try it on. Boy needs a glove."

Henry didn't need to try it on. If he had a glove, then someone would want to play catch, and he would have to throw. He wanted to practice before that happened. Still, he stood up and picked his way through the rows of tables until he stood in front of his uncle. The leather was dark and old. Hairline cracks stood out on the thick fingers, but the palm was shiny smooth. Henry slid his hand inside. It fit nicely.

"We'll oil it up when we get home." Frank took Henry's gloved hand and held it up to his face. "Smell that leather," he said. "Specially treated with dirt, sweat, and ten thousand catches. An old glove's the best glove. You can't buy history new."

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY – N. D. WILSON

At the age of twelve (and thanks to a house fire), N. D. Wilson spent nearly a year living in his grandparents' attic. The ceilings were low and baggy, and a swamp cooler squatted in a window at one end. Inviting crawl spaces ran the length of the attic on both sides. If there were cupboards in those walls, he never found them. But not for lack of trying. He loves barns, still checks walls for hidden doors, and is certain that dandelions are magic.

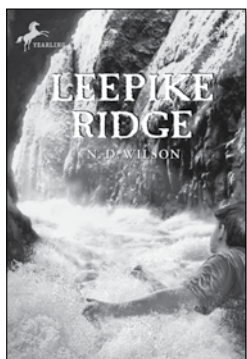
N. D. Wilson and his wife live in Idaho, along with their five young explorers. For more information, please visit www.ndwilson.com.

In His Own Words

“When I was young, I loved Narnia and Middle-earth. I still do. But something always bothered me about those fantastic stories, something about me. I was American. I grew up running through wheat fields, playing baseball, climbing in haylofts and worming my way through the chutes of old, rusted out combines. And I loved all that too. But who I was didn't seem to fit with the stories that fed me.

Now that I'm able to write my own stories, I can bring those two parts of my imagination together—the part that dreamed of wardrobes, and the part that shot at crop-dusters with a cork gun. Magic can find you behind an old barn in Kansas. Ancient mysteries might just be hidden beneath the ridge beside your slow, American creek. My first book, *Leepike Ridge*, floated the creek. Now I'm tackling something bigger. . . . *100 Cupboards*, and it's set in Kansas. At least that's where the adventure begins.

Have you read N. D. Wilson's breathtaking debut?



LEEPIKE RIDGE

★ “This is a ripping good adventure yarn.”
—*The Bulletin*, Starred

“While *Leepike Ridge* is primarily an adventure story involving murder, treachery, and betrayal, Wilson’s rich imagination and his quirky characters are a true delight. . . . There are enough twists and turns in the plot to keep both seasoned and reluctant readers turning the pages.” —*School Library Journal*

“Wilson sets the scene vividly, from Tom’s home to the labyrinth of tunnels and caverns under the mountain, and the central characters’ emotional lives develop both naturally and affectingly. . . . [Readers] will appreciate both the fast-paced adventure and Tom’s determination to make the impossible journey back home.”

—*The Horn Book Magazine*

“Wilson’s debut is a literate, sometimes humorous page-turner in the classic tradition. Well-read adventure lovers are in for a treat looking for echoes of *The Odyssey* and *Tom Sawyer*.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Tom’s adventures have several literary ancestors, including Tom and Huck in the cave, and the inventive *Swiss Family Robinson*, but this is solidly set in the present, standing on its own with well-crafted suspense and fascinating survival detail. . . . [Readers will] relish the physicality of the journey: underwater swims, tight passages, and rock climbing.” —*Booklist*



Where would the

Use the pages to write your own adventure through the cupboards!

This image shows a single sheet of white, textured paper with horizontal ruling lines. The paper has a slightly irregular, deckled edge on the left side. There are 20 evenly spaced horizontal lines across the page, providing a guide for writing. The paper appears to be part of a notebook or a set of stationery.

cupboards take you?



A blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines, resembling a notepad or notebook page. The left edge of the paper is torn and ragged, while the right edge is straight. The paper is set against a plain white background.

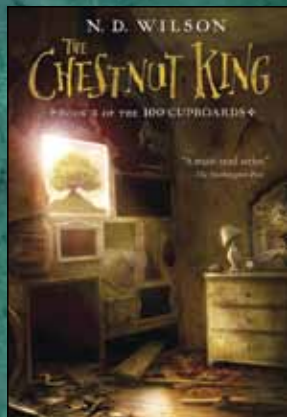
Journey Through the Cupboards!



BOOK ONE



BOOK TWO



BOOK THREE

Other worlds.
Evil witches.
Missing persons.
The cupboards have been opened.

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YEARLING